

Connecticut Communist Party USA

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**Testimony to the Public Health Committee January 31, 2007
Joelle Fishman, Chair, Connecticut Communist Party USA**

Senator Handley; Representative Sayers and Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today in support of Proposed SB 1 "To ensure that all Connecticut residents have access to affordable, quality health care."

This is a long-awaited discussion. The basic human right to comprehensive, accessible, quality health care must extend to everyone living in Connecticut. For far too long we have allowed ourselves to remain hostage to the profit drive of insurance companies and the health care industry.

For the 407,000 people in our state with no coverage and for many times more with inadequate coverage, for those drowning in debt because of health care costs or working well beyond retirement age to retain coverage, the basic human right to health care remains a dream.

The right to equal, quality healthcare is currently out of reach for disproportionately higher percentages of people in the Latino and African American communities, and women with children.

Either directly, or through family members or friends, most everyone has experienced the horrible consequences of the current profits-first healthcare system – emergency room as the doctor of last resort; premature release from the hospital; high prices for medications or therapies, and lack of preventive medicine, families forced to choose between care for life threatening conditions and other essential budget items, to name a few.

A plan that simply adds to the present patchwork of private insurance will do more for insurance industry dividends than for people's healthcare. This is not acceptable.

Improving and expanding Medicare to cover everyone is a simple and practical solution to achieve universal coverage. Twenty to thirty percent of the healthcare dollar now goes to overhead for multiple, competing profit based plans. A Medicare-for-all type system not only gives the most coverage, it also gives the most medicare care at the lowest cost.

A study commissioned by the Universal Health Care Foundation shows that one health plan serving all residents is less expensive for the state, the employer and the individual, would bring in more federal matching funds, and create new jobs.

Like other states, we are forced to act to make up for decades of federal inaction. We should not settle for a bill that speaks of health care for all but does not deliver.

Ultimately it will take a national solution to provide complete, comprehensive, accessible, quality health care for everyone in our country (universal single-payer). In the 110th Congress, Rep. John Conyers is re-introducing HR 676. United States National Health Insurance Act (or the Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act).

The Connecticut State Legislature has a unique opportunity. Strong legislation passed here – in the insurance capitol of the world that meets emergency health needs and expands Medicare for universal coverage, will build the momentum for HR 676. Finally we can catch up with the rest of the world and put health care before profits. There is no time to waste, for the health and well-being of our state and all who live here.